

Delta Voice

The voice of those
who live, work and play
in the Delta.

Summer 2014

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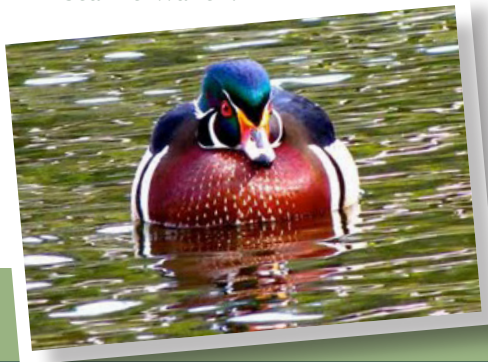
Page 2 - A chat with painter Gregory Kondos, famous for his Delta landscapes.

WOW!

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Wood Duck, photo courtesy of Jeanne Wallen.



A Great Beginning

Clarksburg's Holland Union Gakuen

Tucked behind a wall of trees along Elk Slough near Clarksburg stand two small white buildings, built of redwood in the 1920s. The Holland Union Japanese language school, or *gakuen*, taught Japanese-American children and served as a gathering center for the immigrant community from 1927 to 1942, and then again for two decades as families began to return from internment in the summer of 1946.

Now empty but in good condition, the Clarksburg *gakuen* may be getting a new lease on life. On May 30 a group of architects, preservationists, planners, State and National Parks staffers and interested locals met in a "Vision Workshop" funded by a grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Led by staff from the Delta Protection Commission with assistance from the Delta Conservancy, the group brainstormed ways to preserve and use this rare piece of living history.

Many ideas were suggested during the workshop session, and work has begun to list the site on the National Register of Historic Places. To get involved in this important project, contact the Commission, or Preserving California's Japantowns at www.californiajapantowns.org.



A Thousand Possibilities of Blue

Delta landscapes lie close to the heart of painter Gregory Kondos

You think you know this landscape, these waterways of the Delta. Perhaps you farm here, live here, boat here. Perhaps you've biked the levee roads or watched quietly as great black clouds of sandhill cranes float in for the night, squawking. You know the Delta, yes. But you have not experienced it through the keen, painterly eyes of Gregory Kondos.

An acclaimed landscape artist whose thick, buttery colors have captured the area's topography of sloughs, orchards, gingerbread houses, vineyards and river trees over many decades, Kondos, now 91, speaks of the Sacramento River and its delta in hushed, reverent tones. **Through his eyes, light glints off the water and "blue" holds a thousand possibilities;** where the river bends, magic lies just around the corner.

And now, he says, "a terrible idea" is out to destroy the Delta he loves. He's speaking of Governor Jerry Brown's \$25 billion water conveyance proposal, a.k.a "The Tunnels" in which construction equipment and concrete would turn the reedy, watery east bank of the Sacramento River into three massive intakes for two huge tunnels - each of them roughly 40 feet tall and 35 miles long - between Courtland and Clarksburg, where Kondos once had a home and still has a studio.

"And all of a sudden the beauty and magic are gone because someone had this idea of getting water easier," he said. "The ocean can feed 10 worlds! And here we have something very unique and special - a crossroads really."

"I was between heaven and heaven." - Gregory Kondos

Kondos learned to drive on one of the Delta's river roads and spent many days as a teenager on its waters. He recalls with fondness a Greek fisherman who had a one-room cabin on the Sacramento River and "an old chug-chug boat" from Greece. **"Just the sound of that boat was really something in life to me,"** he said. He was in high school at the time and badly wanted a boat, but didn't have a job. One day, he happened upon a classified listing for a little green rowboat for sale in Placerville. "So I went up there and I bought it for \$25 and I towed it down here and put it in the water..." The Greek fisherman let him tie it to the piling next to his boat.



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Born in Massachusetts to Greek immigrant parents, Gregory Kondos moved to California with his family as a child. He began teaching art at Sacramento City College in 1956, and continued there until his retirement in 1982.

His exhibitions and awards include several one-man shows at galleries in the Bay Area and Sacramento and group exhibitions such as his 1993 show at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York. He cites Maynard Dixon, Willem de Kooning, Paul Cezanne, and Paul Gauguin as influences on his art.

To see the paintings of Gregory Kondos, visit:

Crocker Art Museum
crockerartmuseum.org

Smith Gallery
smithgallery.com

Sacramento City College:
Kondos Gallery
kondosgalleries.org

Kondos would lie down in the boat to look up at the sky or down into or across the water, studying the very hues he paints today. He loved the slap-slap of the waves and the sunlight glinting off the river. **“I was between heaven and heaven,”** he said. That winter, a fierce storm washed the boat away, yet seven decades later the memory remains vivid.

He used to hunt, too, waiting for night to fall in the wetlands as the ducks and geese settled in. The Delta is part of the Pacific Flyway, a freeway of sorts for migratory birds stretching from Alaska to Patagonia. “All night long, I could hear them quacking by my side. I could reach out and pet them just to pass the time away, there were so many of them,” he recalled. In the morning, he’d stand and “all the ducks and geese would take off skyward,” peppering the blueness over him “like confetti.”

“You know what? You just can’t put that together commercially,” he said. “Nature did it. What it gave me was the sounds from the ducks and geese and that beautiful collection of colors that start to open up when dawn came around. It’s just... I wish everyone could experience that, see?”

People make their home here consciously, he said, opting for a rural, river lifestyle – which is rather unique in California. This is our dream, he said, and suddenly, “here comes somebody with an idea. Oh, you have an idea? Really? How about our ideas, which have gone on for hundreds of years?” He summons the grandparents who raised their children here – and their grandparents. People farming the land; the boaters and hunters and vintners. “If the Delta is opened to projects like this, where does it end?”

“Everybody is a painter; not just those with a brush in our hand,” he said. “In our dreams we fantasize rivers, oceans, deserts, mountains – whatever these places are that you love... Every time I look at the river, I say, ‘Is it greener today or is it blue?’ You see, the river is never really blue... But **I’ve seen that river with shadows that dance.** When I go back for the next performance, it changes. It’s a new show. It’s never the same. ... It’s a shame to destroy beauty. If we start destroying beauty, then what do we have?”

“Would you use Yosemite as a dump just because it’s big and deep and could hold a lot of trash?” he asked. “No, someone has said that’s off limits and everyone accepts that. Well, that’s how people who know the Delta feel about it, too.”

Photo Simulations Add Visuals to BDCP Debate

Commission Staff illuminate
information gaps in
the Bay Delta
Conservation Plan

Sourcing the Data

In developing these simulations, several BDCP documents were reviewed, including the “*Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement*” (EIR/EIS) and the “*Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program’s Conceptual Engineering Report: Modified Pipeline / Tunnel Option, Volume 1 (Final Draft Version)*.” These documents clearly outline key details of the water intake structures.

Although the Commission opposes the project, every effort was made for the depictions to be as accurate as possible based on the information provided in the BDCP documents. In the event that insufficient information was available to accurately depict the structures, the Commission anticipated that project proponents would be able to respond and clarify any areas requiring further interpretation.

This spring, Delta Protection Commission staff identified a need for visual simulations of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) “Preferred Alternative” water intake structures, based on specific information in the BDCP documents. This was due to concern over the BDCP’s limited information on how the “Preferred Alternative” water intake structures would impact Delta communities, and the lack of information as to what those structures would look like. The Commission hired David Vasquez, a visual simulations specialist, to develop several simulations, including a “bird’s eye view” animation showing the three water intake structures for the “Preferred Alternative.”

Upper - View from the Clarkburg
Boat Ramp BEFORE

Lower - Same View AFTER

Creating the Simulations

Vasquez developed the images using information from BDCP documents regarding site footprints, construction footprints and cofferdam extension into the river. He also used photographs of the proposed sites, superimposing computer models over the photos. Photographs of the Freeport Water Intake construction process were also used to inform the computer models.



The Public Unveiling

The Commission unveiled the finished images at its May 22nd Commission meeting, fulfilling the goal of helping the public better understand the impacts of BDCP tunnel construction in advance of closure of the EIR/EIS comment period on July 29, 2014. To date, the animation has been viewed more than seven thousand times. In response, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed its own presentation depicting the potential construction impacts. The DWR depiction does not portray the construction zone south of Hood. DWR also stated that the cofferdam in their simulation does not intrude into the river channel as much as it appears to in the Commission's simulation. See the differences for yourself - view Department of Water Resources' simulations, presented to the Commission on June 26, on the BDCP website: <http://baydeltaconservationplan.com/News/News.aspx>



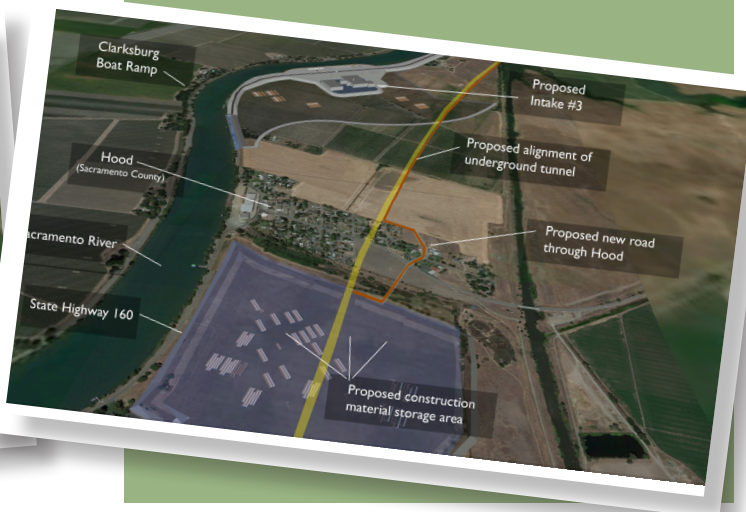
Upper - East Levee
Panoramic
BEFORE

Lower - East Levee
Panoramic
AFTER

For a detailed view of the animation and the images on this page, see the Delta Protection Commission website at www.delta.ca.gov.

Left - Hood Aerial BEFORE

Right - Hood Aerial AFTER



Delta Events

July

12th: Delta Days Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill.
oldsugarmill.com

26-27th: Benicia Waterfront Festival.
beniciamainstreet.org

27th: Courtland Pear Fair. pearfair.org

August

1st: First Friday, Walnut Grove

9th: Taste of the Delta, Tower Park Resort
tasteofthedelta.com

9th: Delta Days Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill.

9-10th: 50's Bash - Bethel Island Park. Car show,
catfish races. bethelisland-chamber.com

September

5th: First Friday, Walnut Grove

13th: Delta Blues Festival, Antioch.
deltabluesfestival.net

13th: Delta Days Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill.
oldsugarmill.com

16th: Sacramento River Delta Historical Society
Meeting, Walnut Grove. srdhs.org

20th: Delta Waterway/Coastal Cleanup, Sites TBA.
delta.ca.gov

25th: Delta Protection Commission Meeting,
Discovery Bay delta.ca.gov

October

3rd: First Friday, Walnut Grove

4-6th: Antique and Classic Boat Society Annual
Gathering, Delta Loop. bandwresort.net

5th: Delta Wine & Art Faire, Clarksburg.
californiadelta.org

4-5th: Giant Pumpkin Festival, Elk Grove.
yourcsd.com/pumpkinfestival

10-12th: Bass Derby & Festival, Rio Vista.
bassfestival.org

11th: Delta Days Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill.



If you have an idea for an article in this newsletter, please send it to us! Email your idea and any pictures or background to dpc@delta.ca.gov.

Delta Protection Commission
2101 Stone Blvd., Suite 210
West Sacramento, CA 95691
916-375-4800 www.delta.ca.gov

